

What's New?

New CECR Resources Online

During the course of the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) program, the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) worked with the first two cohorts of grantees to conduct a data Harvesting Project. From the data collected, CECR developed strategies and lessons learned for implementing performance-based compensation programs. The CECR Harvesting Project released two papers that present findings in two issue areas: (1) communication and stakeholder engagement and (2) linking student-teacher data.

The first report, *Meeting the Challenges of Stakeholder Engagement and Communication: Lessons From Teacher Incentive Fund Grantees*, discusses the challenges TIF grantees faced with stakeholder engagement and communication, the type of technical assistance the grantees requested, and lessons learned from the first two cohorts. The report is available online at http://cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/CECR_HarvestingPaper.pdf.

The second report, *Evaluating Student-Teacher Linkage Data in Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Sites: Acquisition, Verification, and System Development*, presents findings from an exploratory study of eight TIF grantees in how they acquired, verified, and managed their student-teacher linkage data through system development. This report is available online at http://cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/CECR_HarvestingPaper2.pdf.

TIF Cohort 3 Grantees Meet

The U.S. Department of Education, in cooperation with the new technical assistance center for TIF Cohort 3, hosted a meeting for new grantees on February 3 and 4, 2011. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Strategic Initiatives Michael Yudin, U.S. Department of Education, welcomed attendees, shared success stories, and emphasized the importance of the TIF grants. He made clear that the Obama administration supports working to recognize and reward the most effective teachers. In addition to Yudin, staff members from the Department of Education were on hand throughout the conference to meet with grantees.

Participants considered lessons learned from other grantees and had opportunities to ask questions during several panel discussions, which focused on topics ranging from strengthening the educator workforce to forming collaborative, productive labor management relationships. In addition, grantees were able to informally network and collaborate with each other throughout the two-day conference.

Breakout sessions focused on core program components, such as communication and stakeholder engagement, value-added and growth models, and fiscal sustainability. Audience members heard an engaging presentation from Thomas Kane of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on the initial findings from the Measuring Effective Teachers project. During the two days, grantees also had an opportunity to meet jointly with U.S. Department of Education program staff and technical assistance providers to review and discuss an initial needs assessment of their proposals. These short meetings allowed grantees to discuss progress and identify next steps for support.

Materials from the meeting are available at http://www.cecr.ed.gov/news/tif_February11.cfm.

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Hot Off the Press

Area Teachers Unsure of Proposed Plan to Base Pay on Performance—*The Aiken Standard*.

February 8, 2011

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/Local/0209-teacher-salaries>

The state superintendent of education in South Carolina has proposed moving toward a mandatory performance-based compensation program for all teachers and principals. Citing low teacher pay as an impetus for the program, the superintendent proposes a system based on student achievement, principal evaluations of performance, and input from parents and students as criteria for determining teacher pay. Many teachers and principals have expressed hesitation in supporting the program.

Study Finds Few Gains in Schoolwide Pay Program—*Education Week*. February 3, 2011

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2011/02/schoolwide_bonus_pay_and_potential.html

In a new study from Columbia University, researchers found that the New York City schoolwide performance-based compensation program did not have an overall effect on student achievement. The study compares 181 participating schools with a control group. The researchers offer some caveats, including that in schools with high levels of staff collaboration, there were some benefits, such as increased student performance in mathematics.

Six Lucia Mar Schools Could Be on TAP Soon—*Times Press Recorder*. February 3, 2011

<http://www.timespressrecorder.com/articles/2011/02/03/news/fivecities/news08.txt>

Teachers in six schools in the Lucia Mar Unified School District will vote on participation in the TAP System at the end of the month. The Lucia Mar Unified Teachers Association agreed to a contract amendment that allows participation in the performance-based compensation program. Teachers and principals in the chosen schools will be eligible to receive incentives based on the TAP model, which includes multiple career paths, ongoing applied professional growth, instructionally focused accountability, and performance-based compensation.

Teacher Merit Bill Is Back, But With Less Acrimony—*St. Petersburg Times*. February 1, 2011

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20110201/NEWS/102015023>

The Florida State Senate introduced Senate Bill 736, which improved on last year's Senate Bill 6. The legislature considered feedback from key state education stakeholders to revise the proposed state performance-based compensation measures. The proposed program provides incentives to teachers based in part on student test scores. In addition, the teacher evaluation system would account for factors such as student poverty, attendance, disabilities, and language skills.

Fort Worth Independent School District: PEAK Rewards Program

The Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) proposes to enhance and expand the district-developed Public Educators Accelerating Kids (PEAK) Rewards program for 15 high-need schools. PEAK rewards teachers for their students' academic growth. The PEAK Rewards Model uses a value-added approach, a statistical method that helps educators measure the impact schools make on students' academic progress rates from year to year.

Primary Components of the Program

FWISD implemented the PEAK pilot during the 2008–09 school year and launched the third and final year in 2010–11. The critical components of the PEAK pilot include:

- Market-aligned incentives to motivate teachers to join traditionally hard-to-staff schools (Secondary mathematics/science teachers earn a higher incentive than elementary classroom teachers.)
- Improvements in working conditions, including intensive support for new teachers, five additional contract days for campus-based professional development, and other campus supports
- A team-based rewards model with four levels of team awards for accelerated levels of student growth

In the current PEAK pilot, teachers, principals, and other instructional staff receive awards for accelerating student growth. At each level (high school, middle school, and elementary school), PEAK defines a campus scorecard, which outlines four ways that teacher teams earn bonuses for their collective ability to affect and accelerate student growth:

- Campus Team: Acknowledging that teachers, instructional staff, and leadership must work together to show signs of academic achievement across grades and content areas
- Grade-Content Team: Holding all teachers across a content area or grade accountable for collaborating and sharing best practice strategies and tools to drive student achievement

- Vertical Team: Encouraging teachers to work across grade levels to ensure vertical articulation and alignment of concepts and learning
- Horizontal Team: Recognizing the investments made in academic teaming and supporting work across content areas to build stronger student relationships and family outreach strategies

In addition to the PEAK pilot, FWISD will establish an additional performance-based compensation system that rewards, at differentiated levels, teachers and principals who demonstrate their effectiveness by improving student achievement. To address this priority, FWISD will:

- Give significant weight to student growth as measured by the Education Value-Added Assessment System offered by SAS Institute with support from Battelle for Kids and FWISD's Accountability and Data Quality staff.
- Include observation-based assessments of teacher and principal performance at multiple points in time, carried out by trained evaluators and aligned to professional teacher standards through the design and launch of the Individual Development & Effectiveness (ID&E) scorecard.
- Incorporate a principal-level ID&E scorecard based on the district's recently developed Leadership Performance Standards framework that defines principal competencies.

Goals of the Program

The ultimate goal of strategic human capital planning in FWISD is to ensure that every classroom has a highly effective teacher and every school has a highly effective leader. Specifically, FWISD goals include the following:

- Higher teacher and principal retention rates for those who are consistently deemed effective
- Higher percentages of teachers who are deemed highly effective
- More targeted professional development offerings based on the individual, campus, and program needs, as identified by teachers and administrators
- Higher teacher and principal employee satisfaction scores regarding levels of support; opportunities to collaborate; and high-quality, relevant professional development on a campus climate survey

Program Incentives

During the initial PEAK pilot, teachers can earn up to \$13,000 if they are able to earn all four layers of PEAK team rewards. This award constitutes nearly a 24 percent bonus above average salary for a teacher. The maximum award for a principal is \$10,000 at the high school level if he or she earns a PEAK campus award. Teachers, principals, and other instructional staff are also eligible for retention incentives that range from \$1,000 to \$4,000, based on supply-and-demand availability from a market perspective.

Recent Highlights of the Program

FWISD established a website for the PEAK program to help disseminate information to teachers and the public. Information is available about the PEAK program, including value-added model information, frequently asked questions, and eligibility rules at <http://www.fwisd.org/peak/Pages/default.aspx>.

FWISD has already committed \$15 million in local funds to testing and piloting the current performance-based compensation system model. Going forward, the district is committed to leveraging state and other federal grant funds to provide fiscal sustainability. FWISD plans to leverage \$2 to \$3 million per year from eligible and applied-for discretionary funds, including i3, Texas Title I, Priority Schools or School Improvement Grants, and School Leadership grants, as well as entitlement funding through the School Improvement Program and Titles I, II, and IID. In addition, the Fort Worth philanthropic community is launching an FWISD Education Fund to provide additional financial support to targeted initiatives of the district such as PEAK.

Contact Us



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The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) was awarded to Westat — in partnership with Learning Point Associates, Synergy Enterprises Inc., Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin — by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2006.

The primary purpose of CECR is to support Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees in their implementation efforts through provision of sustained technical assistance and development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through a newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities.

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